

CAT CREEK AND WILD HORSE C&H ALLOTMENTS
2015 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

Boise National Forest
Mountain Home Ranger District

INTRODUCTION

The following information is direction on how livestock management is to be conducted on the Cat Creek and Wild Horse Cattle & Horse (C&H) Allotments for the 2015 grazing season. The Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) are part of your Term grazing Permit consistent with Part 1, Item 3 and Part 2, Item 8(a), and you are responsible for compliance with this direction.

Situations may develop during the grazing season that could require changes to these instructions. If this becomes necessary, or if you cannot comply with some part of these instructions, contact Holly Hampton at 587-7867 or Cindy Lancaster at 587-7870, and obtain approval before initiating or deviating from your AOI. Failure to obtain prior approval could result in permit action.

The following table displays the permitted numbers and seasons of use for the Cat Creek and Wild Horse Allotments:

| Allotment Name | Permitted Number and Class | Permitted Season of Use |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| | | |
| Cat Creek – on number | 112 cow/calf | 06/16 – 08/01 |
| off numbers | 88 cow/calf | 06/16 – 08/01 |
| on numbers | 112 cow/calf | 11/01 – 11/05 |
| off numbers | 88 cow/calf | 11/01 – 11/05 |
| on numbers | 62 yearlings | 07/25 – 10/31 |
| off numbers | 48 yearlings | 07/25 – 10/31 |
| on numbers | 10 cow/calf | 07/25 – 10/31 |
| off numbers | 10 cow/calf | 07/25 – 10/31 |
| | | |
| Wild Horse – on number | 72 cow/calf | 07/16 – 10/31 |
| off numbers | 288 cow/calf | 07/16 – 10/31 |
| on numbers | 22 yearlings | 07/16 – 10/31 |
| off numbers | 88 yearlings | 07/16 – 10/31 |

For the 2015 grazing season, you are authorized to graze the Cat Creek and Wild Horse Allotments as follows:

| Allotment Name | Authorized Number and Class | Authorized Season of Use |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | |
| Cat Creek – on number | 112 cow/calf | 06/16 – 08/01 |
| off numbers | 88 cow/calf | 06/16 – 08/01 |
| on numbers | 112 cow/calf | 11/01 – 11/05 |
| off numbers | 88 cow/calf | 11/01 – 11/05 |
| on numbers | 62 yearlings | 07/25 – 10/31 |
| off numbers | 48 yearlings | 07/25 – 10/31 |
| | | |
| Wild Horse – on number | 32 cow/calf | 07/16 – 10/31 |
| off numbers | 128 cow/calf | 07/16 – 10/31 |
| on | 112 cow/calf | 08/01- 10/31 |
| off | 88 cow/calf | 08/01- 10/31 |
| off numbers | 10 cow/calf | 07/16 – 10/31 |

Some flexibility will be allowed for weather conditions, range readiness and livestock needs. The period of use is also subject to compliance with Forest Plan standards and guidelines and Implementation Monitoring requirements as discussed below. Please review carefully the standards and guides listed.

Starting for the 2015 grazing season the Bennett Mountain pasture will be effectively removed from the grazing rotation and from the Cat Creek Allotment. This pasture was 95% private land and 5% BLM. They have requested to have it removed to allow more flexibility within their private lands. This pasture is 100% fenced off from Forest Service Lands. See request letter from Tree Top Ranches and Permit Modification Letter in File.

BILLING INFORMATION

The grazing fee for the 2015 grazing season is \$1.69 per head month for cattle. You will be billed based on the authorized use listed above. Confirmation of payment through the National Finance Center is required and must be received before livestock can enter National Forest System lands. In order to meet this requirement, please ensure that bills for collection are paid by the due date indicated.

If permitted livestock are required to leave an allotment early because utilization standards have been reached, drought conditions persist or other reasons as determined by the Forest Officer, a credit/refund may be requested. **This request must be submitted in writing to the District Ranger by December 1, 2015.**

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Livestock may enter the Cat Creek allotment no sooner than June 16. Approximately 200 cow/calf pairs will enter the Heifer Pasture (i.e. Cat Creek Pasture) no sooner than June 16 and will remain in this pasture until August 01 or until utilization standards are achieved whichever occurs first. These cattle will then be moved to the Cow Creek Pasture of the Wild Horse Allotment where they will join the cattle already in this pasture. Approximately 110 head of yearlings will enter the Cat Creek pasture (i.e. Chimney Creek pasture) on July 25th. These yearlings will remain in the Cat Creek pasture until the end of the grazing season or until utilization standards are met whichever occurs first.

Livestock may enter the Wild Horse Allotment no sooner than July 16. Livestock will be rotated through the pastures as utilization standards are met. Approximately 170 cattle will be initially placed in the Wildhorse Pasture (i.e. German Field) and later joined by the 200 pairs from the Cat Creek Allotment (08/01). On approximately August 20 or earlier when utilization standards are achieved all the livestock will be moved to the Negro Creek Pasture. Once utilization standards are met in this pasture or approximately September 30, all of the livestock will be moved to the Cow Creek pasture which does not contain any National Forest System Lands Pasture where they will remain until the end of the grazing season or until utilization standards are met whichever occurs first. Once utilization standards are met in the last pasture, livestock must be removed from the entire allotment.

Please remember that only the authorized kind and class of livestock should be grazed on your allotments during the authorized season. Any deviation from this should be approved in advance by the Forest Service.

You must notify the Forest Service no less than five (5) days prior to livestock being placed on the allotments so that authorized livestock numbers can be verified by district range staff if the Forest Service elects to do so.

STANDARDS AND GUIDES

Close monitoring of utilization levels and diligent removal of livestock when they are reached is critical to ensure compliance with end-of-season utilization standards. Failure to meet these standards may result in the modification of grazing management, including reductions in Head Months or permitted area.

The following standards and guidelines apply to the Cat Creek and Wild Horse Allotments:

- Maximum forage utilization of representative areas within each pasture shall not exceed the values shown below at the end of the growing season. Variation in utilization standards in order to achieve specific vegetative management objectives shall occur with a site-specific or project-level decision according to direction in FSM 1922.5.

Upland Vegetative Cover Types: Vegetative slow growth, after seed ripe conditions or late season pastures – 50 percent use. (RAST01, p. III-45)

- Livestock salting is prohibited in Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs). Place salt no closer than ¼ mile from water and not within 100 feet of roads. Move salt from areas where utilization standards have been met. (RAST04, p. III-45)
- All livestock water developments must provide access and escape to and from water for all types of wildlife. (RAST09, p. III-45)
- Previously grazed units must have all livestock removed from them.
- Bulls must test negative for Trichomoniasis before entering National Forest System lands.
- Only certified weed-free hay and mulch are allowed on National Forest System lands.

IMPROVEMENTS

Your Term Grazing Permit contains a complete list of range improvements associated with the Cat Creek and Wild Horse Allotments. Please note that all range improvements must be maintained to a proper functioning condition before livestock are placed within each unit on your allotments. Failure to do so is a violation of your term grazing permit and is subject to permit action. In the event improvements cannot be practically maintained to standard, you should notify this office so we can identify them for reconstruction as funds become available.

Non-functioning range improvements need to be brought to standard, or arrangements made with district range personnel to have them removed. Abandonment of improvements is not acceptable – if developments are not functioning and are no longer needed, they must be removed. If they are in a location that does not allow for removal, these non-functioning improvements still need to allow for bird and small mammal escape. Metal troughs need to have holes cut in them large enough to allow birds and small mammals to escape from them or be tipped over so that they do not hold water. Tires also need to have holes cut in them, or be popped loose from their cement bottom and propped up slightly on edge, to allow birds and small mammals to escape from them. If none of these options are feasible, a wildlife escape ramp needs to be installed and maintained in the trough.

Wildlife escape ramps need to be installed in tire troughs. These ramps are being supplied by the Forest Service. These ladders should be installed in all tire troughs on your allotments prior to turn on. This direction also includes troughs that hold water in the spring but dry up later in the grazing season. Failure to comply could result in adverse action to your permit. Please contact Holly or Cindy as soon as possible if you need to pick up escape ramps.

RIDER OR PERMITTEE INSTRUCTIONS

Off dates for these allotments are considered approximate and will depend on utilization levels. To prevent over-utilization, a concerted effort should be made to distribute

livestock over the entire allotment and to effectively graze all suitable areas in that unit. Permitted numbers are based on the premise that active management will occur to effect adequate livestock distribution. Livestock need to be moved before meeting riparian and upland grazing standards. If livestock are allowed to concentrate in riparian areas and water developments without being distributed to unused areas of the allotment, the grazing capacity of the allotment is diminished to those areas only.

Permittee monitoring of utilization levels is not mandatory, but is highly advised since permittees will be held accountable for any failures to meet end-of-season compliance monitoring.

REQUIRED REPORTING

Enclosed are two Year-end Grazing Reports for you to record actual use data and range improvement maintenance for the 2015 grazing season for the Cat Creek and Wild Horse Allotments. You need to record the date and number of cattle turned onto each allotment, the number and date cattle are removed from each allotment, and estimate the time and cost of management actions, including livestock herding and improvement maintenance, associated with each allotment. Accurate records of these dates, maintenance work, and range improvement needs should be kept and returned to our office at the end of the grazing season. The Forest Service uses these records to help allocate Range Betterment Funds. These funds are used to purchase materials for improvements. **This report should be returned to the Forest Service's Mountain Home Ranger District office no later than December 1, 2015.**

INSPECTIONS AND MONITORING

Range personnel may require you to delay your entry date on the Cat Creek or Wild Horse Allotments based on range readiness inspections that they have completed. You will be notified as soon as possible if your turn-on date is delayed.

Range personnel may conduct utilization monitoring and improvement inspections periodically on your allotments.

COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game is responsible for wolf management in Idaho. The Regional Wildlife Wolf Biologist for the Fish and Game is Jennifer Struthers. Any questions you may have regarding wolf management should be directed to her. She can be reached at 208-465-8465 ext. 350.

If you suspect a wolf depredation has occurred on your livestock, USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services (Wildlife Services) should be contacted as soon as possible. The local Wildlife Services contact for this area is Jered Hedelius. He can be reached at (208) 681-8756. In the event that you cannot reach Jered, Todd Grimm should be contacted at the Boise District Office at 208-373-1630.

OTHER

When livestock carcasses are located near campgrounds, roads, trails or water reasonable and appropriate action must be taken to remove any carcasses. The permittee will contact the District Ranger's Representative to discuss the problem and determine what action would be appropriate for each site specific instance. Although the Forest Service recognizes that disposal of carcasses is not always feasible in many situations there are a number of reasonable options available for the disposal of single or multiple carcasses. In most cases, carcasses should be moved at least 100 yards from campgrounds, roads, trails or water.

The Forest Service's Motor Vehicle Use Rule is in place on the Mountain Home Ranger District. Public motorized, wheeled vehicle use is prohibited on all NFS lands except on routes that are designated on the current year's Motorized Vehicle Use Map. This AOI authorizes you and your employees to use wheeled motor vehicles off of designated routes for administrative use within your allotments for livestock management purposes. However, specific routes will need to be identified each year. See description of routes needed for administrative use below. This administrative use includes salting and herding of livestock, maintenance of range improvements, and forage utilization inspections. Use of heavy equipment, such as bulldozers or backhoes is **not** included in this authorization. Use of heavy equipment will need to be requested through and approved by the District Ranger on a case-by-case basis.

Routes Approved for Administrative Use:

- 1). Access to the Cat Creek Summit North boundary fence located at T1S R10E Section 31 NWNW via existing road/ATV trail.
- 2). Access to the Cat Creek-Wood Creek boundary fence located at T1S R10E Section 29 SENW via existing road/ATV trail.
- 3). Access to the Cat Creek-North Camas boundary fence located at T2S R10E Section 2 SWNE via existing road/ATV trail.
- 4). Access to the Highway 20 boundary fence located at T1S R9E Section 23 NWSE via existing road/ATV trail.
- 5). Access to the Cat Creek Summit South boundary fence located at T1S R10E Section 31 NWNW via existing road/ATV trail.
- 6). Access to the Highway 20 Reservoir boundary fence located at T1S R9E Section 23 SWSW via existing road/ATV trail.
- 7). Access to the Wild Horse boundary fence located at T1S R10E Section 1 NESE via existing road/ATV trail.
- 8). Access to the Wild Horse-Moores Flat boundary fence located at T1SR10E Section 1 SWSE via existing road/ATV trail.
- 9). Access to the Bennett Cat Creek boundary fence located at T1S R10E Section 31 NESE via existing road/ATV trail.

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|------------------|---------|
| Stephaney Church | 5/19/15 |
| District Ranger | Date |